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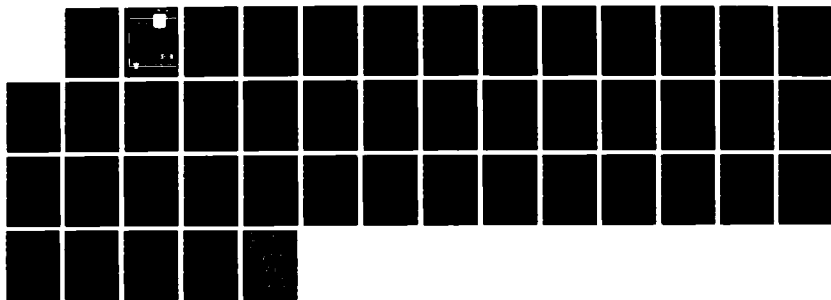
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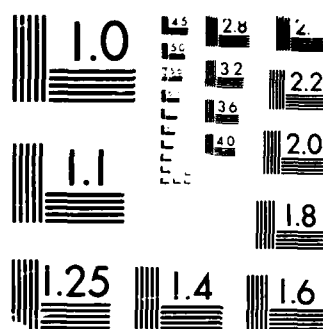
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TRAINING READINESS OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
FIELD GRADE COMBAT ARMS OFFICER

BY

COLONEL DAVID S. BEST, IN

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Grade Officers' experience and education, how they train their units and their subordinate leaders and their lack of understanding of how to fight AirLand Battle doctrine. The study makes several recommendations on how to set up various training programs to correct these training deficiencies and raise the experience level of the ARNG Field Grade Officer.

This essay/study by no means was written to degrade the ARNG and its officers. It merely points out that our active Army leadership needs to place more emphasis on the training of these officers and provide them the necessary doctrinal experience so they can properly train their units and subordinate officers to fight the Army's doctrine. The comments and suggestions in this essay/study are for the most part the opinions of the author, but as stated are consistent with current training doctrine. The philosophy presented herein reinforces various precepts and concepts contained in current training doctrine and offers opinions, suggestions and some techniques which may improve training readiness of these officers.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

TRAINING READINESS OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
FIELD GRADE COMBAT ARMS OFFICER

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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30 March 1988

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: David S. Best, COL, IN

TITLE: Training Readiness of the Army National Guard Field  
Grade Combat Arms Officer

FORMAT: Individual Essay and Study Project

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The purpose of this essay/study is to present a personal view of what is felt to be a significant training shortfall inherent in our Army National Guard (ARNG) Combat Arms Maneuver Brigades and Battalions. The essay/study initially focuses on the capabilities of the ARNG Major and the Lieutenant Colonel, his background, the ARNG military educational system and the military environment within which he works. The essay/study also shows, through personal observation and research, that there are significant weaknesses in the ARNG Field Grade Officers' experience and education, how they train their units and their subordinate leaders and their lack of understanding of how to fight AirLand Battle doctrine. The study makes several recommendations on how to set up various training programs to correct these training deficiencies and raise the experience level of the ARNG Field Grade Officer.

This essay/study by no means was written to degrade the ARNG and its officers. It merely points out that our active Army leadership needs to place more emphasis on the training of these officers and provide them the necessary doctrinal experience so they can properly train their units and subordinate officers to fight the Army's doctrine. The comments and suggestions in this essay/study are for the most part the opinions of the author, but as stated are consistent with current training doctrine. The philosophy presented herein reinforces various precepts and concepts contained in current training doctrine and offers opinions, suggestions and some techniques which may improve training readiness of these officers.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"Today, the Army National Guard and Army Reserves are fully integrated elements of our national deterrent strategy, our peacetime operational missions and our Total Force warfighting capability."<sup>1</sup>

The above quote from a National Guard monthly magazine demonstrates the amount of reliance the United States Government places on our National Guard and Reserve Forces to enforce our national policy and protect and preserve our way of life. The magazine also stated that by the end of 1987, 51 percent of the Army's combat forces would come from the Army National Guard (ARNG) and Army Reserve. It went on to further say that during FY 87, approximately \$2.1 billion in equipment is planned for issue to the Army Reserve Components, including the M-1 and M-60A3 tank, AH-64 and UH-60 helicopters and the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (BIFV). These figures are very impressive and profound. We as a country are placing a great deal of our self-preservation on an armed force that we truly believe is combat ready to meet any aggressive challenge that the United States might face. I personally do not have any doubt that our National Guard and Reserve Forces are willing and dedicated to perform any mission that our President asks them to do. However, I am skeptical about whether or not we have adequately trained and prepared the ARNG and Army Reserve combat arms Field Grade Officers at the Battalion and Brigade level to meet the physical and mental challenges that a modern-day battlefield will present. As

our army becomes more sophisticated, the demands on the leaders increase exponentially. Our army will be operating the most technologically advanced equipment and weapons systems in history...systems capable of defeating virtually any threat on any type of terrain and under the most adverse weather conditions. This enhanced capability incurs an obligation to ensure that leaders are proficient in their ability to plan and lead our soldiers into battle. We can not afford to repeat the history of needless loss of lives due to inexperienced unseasoned soldiers and leaders.<sup>2</sup> This essay/study will point out some common ARNG combat arms Field Grade Officers weaknesses in training and experience and make recommendations to strengthen these weaknesses.

#### BACKGROUND

With the advent of this new modern equipment being issued to the ARNG and Army Reserves, new AirLand Battle doctrine being developed and the realization that the ARNG only trains one weekend per month and two weeks of annual training every year, can we honestly say that these Army Reserve forces are ready to meet the challenges of a modern battlefield? How well trained are their senior Field Grade Officers in combat arms units? How much experience have the commanders of combat arms units had in maneuvering a combined arms team in a field environment at either the Brigade or Battalion level? How many times have these officers been afforded the opportunity to work with their respective

wartime attachments (engineers, artillery, ADA, military police, forward air controllers, combat service support assets, chemical, intelligence, etc.)? How many times in a training year does the ARNG training system put its Brigade and Battalion Commanders and their respective battle staffs through a rigorous and stress-filled CPX or FTX? More importantly, does the ARNG Commander and staff officer have enough experience to properly train, supervise and critique their subordinates on such events as basic tactics, AirLand Battle doctrine, staff procedures, estimates, operations orders and plans and logistics? What effect does the dispersion of subordinate units in relation to their Brigade or Battalion Headquarters have on the senior commander's opportunity to provide instant feedback or supervision to his subordinate commanders, to inspect training or to interface more with his soldiers? Since AirLand Battle doctrine stresses a combined arms philosophy, how many opportunities in one year does a ARNG Brigade or Battalion Commander have to assemble his battle staff for training? The last question that should be asked is how many of these same combat arms officers are physically and mentally prepared to fight for a sustained period of time on a stress-filled battlefield?

#### AUTHOR'S PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Since 1983, I have worked with various units from four different ARNG Divisions during their annual training (AT) periods and monthly drills while assigned to two Combat Maneuver Divisions. During my last assignment, I had the opportunity to

rotate to the National Training Center (NTC) with an M-1 ARNG Tank Battalion. It has been my experience, after working with several ARNG Battalions, that one of their major weaknesses was the lack of technical and tactical competence of their Field Grade Officers. I found that the combat arms soldier and NCO were very capable individuals when they were given proper guidance and direction. For the most part, I found that many of the Field Grade Commanders, whom I came in contact with, were either very reluctant to correct or critique their subordinate commanders and staff, or they totally relied on their staff to get them through a particular event. In either case, I concluded that these particular commanders were not incompetent, but unfamiliar with AirLand Battle doctrine and basic tactics to properly guide and critique their subordinates. They were also technically weak in their understanding of maintenance and logistics. Consequently, junior officers were doing basically what past experiences had shown them, not what was tactically or technically correct.

CHAPTER I

ENDNOTES

1. Webb, James H. "Unique Progress Made in Readiness."  
Officer. February 1987, p. 26.
2. Ibid., p. 28.

CHAPTER II  
THE ENVIRONMENT  
INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look at the professional development system that is available to the ARNG officer, some of the more common problems a Field Grade Commander and Operations Officer is faced with and the environment under which they work and train. It will also present a personal training philosophy which reinforces various precepts and concepts contained in current training doctrine, and which offers opinions, suggestions and some techniques which may improve a maneuver units' combat readiness. The comments and suggestions presented are the opinions of the author, but as stated are consistent with current Army training doctrine published by TRADOC.

THE NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER

We need to start by considering where the ARNG Officer comes from and some of the circumstances under which he must operate. One thing that becomes readily apparent is that even though the Army National Guard is part of the Total Army it is a unique portion of that Army. The ARNG has unique constraints, needs, requirements, and in some instances, organizations. While it would be nice or maybe even ideal to have the ARNG Officer as professionally qualified as an active Army Officer, it is impossible in most cases. In the ARNG, time available for devotion to military duties, training and education varies greatly

from officer to officer. A study conducted by MG Charles Bagnel showed that a dichotomy sometimes exists between those ARNG officers possessing the best abilities and potential and those with lesser attributes. The officer with the most natural ability and potential is usually the same person to rise to higher positions of responsibility within their civilian occupation. Thus when this officer is afforded the opportunity to attend an Army resident course, he usually cannot accept. Consequently, the officer with lesser attributes takes his place because he has more available time.<sup>1</sup>

The ARNG officer is a family man and a employee in the civilian community, yet he is a citizen soldier who must be professionally qualified and ready to mobilize on short notice. Thus the ARNG Officer must therefore simultaneously refine civilian and military skills. Because of this unique and demanding position, he must wisely use his time.

The ARNG Officers are managed primarily by The Adjutants General of the 54 states and territories. Geographic constraints play an extremely important role in the development and assignment of officers. The spectrum of potential assignments can be very narrow, forcing an officer to travel great distances to join a unit that requires his specialty or MOS or forcing him to change his branch or specialty so he can be assigned to an organization closer to his domicile.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

Based on some of these constraints and problems, it seems logical that the development of a complete education system for the ARNG requires at least as much attention, analysis and resourcing as it takes to develop an educational system for active component officers. Development of these educational systems must be managed on an integrated basis with equal priorities. Changes to one will almost always impact on the other and therefore cannot be made in isolation. The United States advocates a policy of reliance on the National Guard and Army Reserve for any future contingency. With this policy, it told the National Guard that its officer corps should be motivated, well-educated and highly trained. It also implied that the officer professional development system should ensure that an officer is taught the right things at the right time in his career, in the right places, with maximum effectiveness.

## ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Let us examine the formal schooling opportunities a ARNG Officer has to develop his military career. An ARNG Officer is commissioned either through the ARNG or through active Army officer commissioning programs (West Point, ROTC, OCS). Completion of the Officer Basic Course (OBC) has historically been the basis for the officer to be promoted to First Lieutenant and Captain. This course can be completed either by attendance to the residence course or the OBC-RC course.



Successful completion of an Officers Advance Course (OAC) meets the educational requirements for promotion to the grade of Major. This course can be completed through attendance in residence at the Officer Advanced Course (OAC), OAC-RC, OAC-USAR or the Officer Advanced Nonresident Course.

The Combined Arms and Service Staff School (CAS3) does not play a significant part in the National Guard Officers professional development. However, the ARNG has made attendance at CAS3 mandatory for title 10 AGR Officers providing they have not completed or enrolled in the Command and General Staff Officers Course (CGSOC).

CGSOC is the highest military educational requirement a National Guard Officer must have for promotion purposes. Successful completion of half this course meets the requirements for promotion to LTC and completion of the entire course is required for promotion to Colonel. An officer may complete the course by attendance to the resident course, USAR School or the Nonresident Instruction Course.

The Senior Service Colleges (SSC) are not mandatory for National Guard Officers nor is it tied to retention or promotion. Attendance is restricted based on limited quotas available at each school. Likewise, the USAWC correspondence course is also restricted. Approximately 20 ARNG Officers attend the resident course each year while 50 are selected for the USAWC Corresponding Studies Program.

Schools play an important role in the development of an ARNG Officer. If they are completed in a timely manner, they certainly help to prepare the ARNG Officer for his wartime mission. However, it is important that the Guard Officer receive the same developmental experiences as active component officers. This will allow them to build on the fundamentals of the profession by increasing their knowledge and skills in tactics, strategy, the application of technology, logistics, military history, the human factors of war, and establish a pursuit of remaining current in and consider the potential future consequences of events and environmental factors so as to gain an understanding of the nature of future wars.<sup>2</sup>

#### PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS - RESEARCH

##### Research

The U.S. Army and the Army National Guard have spent considerable time analyzing various training methods and ideas for the ARNG. Realistically speaking, the ARNG can not meet all the training requirements outlined in Army training regulations in twelve weekend drills and one annual training period. Within the individual training arena, senior leaders have concluded that the ARNG ought to look at each individual MOS and ensure that each soldier can perform those critical skills within his MOS that would allow him to perform satisfactorily in his wartime mission. Likewise, the Army has recently developed the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) that will train Corps and Division

Commanders and their battle staffs using computerized simulation in lieu of actual tactical deployment. At the same time, a great deal of emphasis has also been placed on mobilization exercises. For example, during each Reforger year, part of the CONUS force deploying to Europe is from the ARNG. Units are assembled, marshalled and then flown to Europe to participate in a two to four week field training exercise (FTX). Certainly it is understood that one of the major objectives of the exercise is to allow the Army Staff to plan and execute the movement of CONUS forces to Europe under a prescribed scenario, not to measure the effectiveness of an ARNG unit maneuvering in Europe. As recent as October 23, 1987, the Army gave a pop quiz on mobilization to its Army National Guardsmen and Reservists. About 6,000 Guardsmen and Reserve members from various units around the United States were ordered to report for duty in a mock mobilization exercise designed to test the call-up system. Results of the exercise indicated that they passed the test with flying colors. My point in explaining these studies, exercises and tests is not to degrade these systems, but to point out that the Army has looked at and solved many of the problems concerning the training and readiness of the individual ARNG soldier, the ARNG Division Commander and his battle staff and the Nation's ability to mobilize and move its Reserve forces to a prescribed area under a precise scenario. However, the one area that seems to have been forgotten is the training of the ARNG Brigade and Battalion Commanders and their Field Grade Staff Officers to

fight Army doctrine. Previously, this research paper discussed in detail the ARNG Officer's professional education system and the requirements to meet certain gates for promotion, but there has not been a study conducted that looked at or measured the professional competence of these field grade leaders. The Army is placing a great deal of emphasis on its field grade leadership to be able to win the first battle of the next war, to be an effective mentor to junior officers, to be able to synchronize various warfighting machines into one destructive force that will destroy an enemy at a decisive point and time and to be able to effectively train their subordinates and units to be combat ready. I would think that training of Field Grade Officers on how to fight Army doctrine would be one of the Army's top training priorities. The Army certainly can not afford to repeat the leadership mistakes it made initially in previous wars.

Brigadier General William Stofft, Chief of Military History, remarked,

"Of the 10 'first battles' America fought in its major wars between 1776 and 1965, the U.S. Army suffered five defeats. Four of the five victories were very costly - some might say too costly for the gains achieved."<sup>3</sup>

Viewing those 10 battles in retrospect, historian John Shy wrote,

"Inexperience will be paid for in blood.... Virtually every case study emphasizes the lack of realistic large scale operational exercises before the first battle, exercises that might have taught commanders and staff the hard practical side of their wartime business."<sup>4</sup>

TRADOC has stated that it is determined not to let their soldiers lose or die for want of that training. General Vuono, as the TRADOC Commander, stated that, A key part of that job is leader development. I emphasize the words leader development. What is the Army doing to train the ARNG Brigade and Battalion combat arms Commanders and their Field Grade Staff Officers to become effective leaders and trainers on how to fight our Army doctrine.

#### Personal Observations

In the course of the last eight years, I have observed, instructed and graded a number of ARNG Commanders and their battle staffs from four different ARNG Divisions during their annual training periods, ARTEP evaluations and monthly drills. From what I have witnessed, I felt that the combat arms Field Grade Officers' major weaknesses were a lack of understanding of AirLand Battle doctrine, knowledge of basic combat arms tactics and experience to effectively plan and execute a tactical combat mission. As stated previously, I had the opportunity to rotate to the NTC with a M-1 Tank Battalion from an ARNG Division. Six months prior to this NTC rotation, my Brigade Commander sent training teams every month to their armory to help prepare their commanders, staff and leaders for this training exercise. A great deal of time was spent organizing their staff and establishing their operating systems. There was no doubt that this battalion was ready for any mobilization exercise or no-notice administration inspection. However, tactically speaking,

there were many flaws in their standard field operating procedures. These flaws were primarily due to a lack of experience, and knowledge at the Field Grade Officer level. The battalion simply was never afforded the opportunity to put it (the battalion) all together for a sustained period of time. The Field Grade Officers in the battalion certainly knew the mechanical and gunnery aspects of the M-1 tank, but when it came to sustaining it (logistically) in the field, they were totally inexperienced. These same officers showed a great deal of enthusiasm over AirLand Battle doctrine, but when they had to give their subordinates guidance or a commander's intent to plan an attack or defense, they could only repeat memorized buzz words or phrases which had very little meaning to the mission. This situation created a great deal of confusion among the staff officers and subordinate commanders. Consequently, the staff was unable to put together a coordinated operations order. The same was true when it came time for these senior officers to provide guidance to their combat support elements. Since their experience was very limited on how these elements functioned, they found it very difficult and awkward to give any guidance other than "give me your plan on how you will support me." Once a combat support plan was written, neither the commander or staff ever challenged its content. Everyone just assumed that it was tactically correct and it supported the scheme of maneuver.

This particular unit's field SOP's were merely documents filled with innocuous platitudes. They were written with little

thought and served to fulfill a requirement to have one. Many were completed and some were copied before the battalion actually determined how it was going to do business.

As far as the ARNG enlisted men are concerned, I have no doubt that the individual combat arms ARNG soldier, if properly led, can perform his mission just as effective, if not better than an active Army combat arms soldier. I personally had 65 ARNG Infantry soldiers from five different states join my battalion as fillers for a NTC rotation. These soldiers did not come with their immediate leadership (NCOs), but as separate volunteers. Not one of these soldiers had any Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (BIFV) experience, but were well qualified in basic Infantry skills. The only training time with their new leaders (platoon leaders and NCOs) was the five days the battalion had in the "dust bowl" at the NTC prior to starting its maneuvers. Their performance and physical endurance during the two-week exercise was outstanding.

These particular experiences that have been expounded on were also evident in various degrees in five other combat arms battalions from three different ARNG Divisions that I evaluated during summer AT periods. Almost to the man, senior Field Grade Officers had the same tendency to leave a great deal of the planning and execution up to the imagination of their junior officers. There was very little tactical guidance, staff supervision or mentoring that was given to their subordinates. For the most part, the annexes to operations orders were not

coordinated. Each staff officer had his own idea on how he would execute his portion of the plan. Consequently, when the final order was briefed to the Battalion Commander, disagreements among the subordinate commanders and staff officers evolved creating confusion. However, these staff officers did demonstrate a great deal of enthusiasm and were impressed with their own individual capabilities. Their total collective results probably would have led their battalions to an ultimate period of failure.

At this point in the study, it is felt that it is important to discuss the word "synchronization" and its meaning, and how it applies to a combat arms leader. The word "synchronization" is one of the four basic tenets in AirLand Battle doctrine that the Army says it will depend on to succeed on the battlefield. FM 100-5 defines synchronization as the arrangement of battlefield activities in time, space and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point.<sup>5</sup> It goes on to further say,

"...synchronization may and usually will require explicit coordination among the various units and activities participating in any operation. By itself, however, such coordination is no guarantee of synchronization, unless the Commander first visualizes the consequences to be produced and how activities must be sequenced to produce them. Synchronization thus takes place first in the mind of the Commander and then in the actual planning and coordination of movements, fires and supporting activities. Synchronization need not depend on explicit coordination if all forces involved fully understand the intent of the Commander and if they have developed and rehearsed well conceived standard responses to anticipate contingencies."<sup>6</sup>

I have underlined (above) certain key phrases that I feel are essential to both a Commander and Field Grade Staff Officer's



professional competency in winning any battle in a future conflict. These synchronization factors apply to every combat arms commander whether he is active Army or Army National Guard. It is essential that every combat arms commander understand the principles of this tenet, and be provided the opportunity to put into practice (training wise) its implied application.

Unfortunately, it has been my experience that words like coordination, visualize, intent, develop and rehearse are missing from the vocabulary, the written plans and orders, and understanding of ARNG Commanders at the Brigade and Battalion level. Without understanding the principles of this tenet, a task force on today's battlefield can not survive. Learning to synchronize these principles is a skill and an art that must be understood, planned, trained, rehearsed and executed in precise detail so that a task force can maximize its total combined fire power against an enemy at a decisive point. This is called fighting outnumbered and winning. My point in mentioning this tenet only reinforces the fact that Field Grade Commanders and staff officers in the ARNG must understand AirLand Battle doctrine, know how to fight it, and be able to express it in their commander's intent and operations orders.

#### NATIONAL GUARD ENVIRONMENT

One cannot blame these officers for not having the experience or the know-how to adequately answer questions, critique exercises, or teach AirLand Battle doctrine to subordinate officers considering the conditions and environment under which

they work. It should be remembered that these officers train once a month to prepare themselves and their units for combat. For the most part, many ARNG combat arms brigades and battalions operate under some very difficult constraints.

Almost every Field Grade Officer that I interviewed seemed to be more transfixed with his ability and his units' inability to stay on top of his day-to-day administration and logistical requirements. Training, according to them, took a back seat to these two areas. These officers felt that if they failed to complete or execute a requirement in either one of these areas, their existence as a senior leader in the ARNG would be placed in jeopardy. One ARNG Officer stated that he spent more time personally answering reply by endorsements (RBIs) from higher headquarters than he did training his soldiers. Almost all of the past and present ARNG Commanders interviewed stated that their biggest problem was their full-time National Guard employees. These employees were expected to keep the unit running during non-drill periods. For the most part, commanders felt that these full-time employees were not adequately trained nor were they competent enough to handle the daily affairs of the unit when the leadership was not present. Consequently, what did not get done during the week by these employees usually had to be sorted out by the commander or his staff on their off-duty time. In addition to this, a great deal of time was spent by the commander trying to train these employees. This situation created a great deal of concern among these senior leaders to the point where

they felt it impacted on both their personal and unit training time.

Education was another problem. Most of the Field Grade officers interviewed felt there was too much time between mandatory officer development schools. They felt that AirLand Battle doctrine, the Threat, technology and equipment was changing almost on a daily basis, and yet there was no immediate school to bring them up-to-date on the latest changes. They all said that they were receiving the latest field and technical manuals, but they had very little time to read them, because their civilian jobs and National Guard requirements took up most of their spare time.

Training their staffs was evident, but in my estimation, not very effective. These same Field Grade Officers stated that their units usually participated in separate Battalion, Brigade, and Division CPX's at least once a year. These CPX's were either conducted during weekend drills or at AT periods. As one ARNG Officer stated, they learn by on-the-job training (OJT) mistakes in his battalion. How did they identify their mistakes? Usually through the observations of other ARNG Officers. This particular officer gave a perfect example of what I would call "What worked well last time should certainly work well this time." At the start of a CPX, one of his key staff operations officers immediately jumped into the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and began to fill out situational reports before he knew the general situation. Why did he do this? In a past CPX, the

staff had been criticized for not keeping its higher headquarters informed on the battalion's situation. The point clearly demonstrates a reaction to satisfy a requirement before correcting the faulty operating system. Right or wrong, the entire situation indicated there was no TOC procedural system in place and the staff officer was not being adequately supervised.

Through my own experiences and observations, I have found the ARNG Staff Officers in the field are very competent and professional soldiers when they are given the right kind of guidance and supervision. When this staff is collectively put together in a field environment under their own internal leadership, I have found that the Executive Officer, at both the Brigade and the Battalion, is the weakest individual within this staff group. His familiarity with TOC procedures, knowledge of staff planning and coordination, ability to direct a tactical or logistical situation and providing the right kind of guidance is extremely weak. These Executive Officers seem to have a very difficult time translating the commander's intent into a well coordinated plan. For the most part, they allowed their staff officers to work in isolation of one another. Consequently, various functional areas were not coordinated. They also are unable to detect many doctrinal errors within their plans and orders because of their own lack of knowledge in tactical doctrine. In the final analysis, these Executive Officers provide little supervision and mentorship to their subordinates.

On the other hand, the Operations Officer seemed to be the catalyst of the staff. Through my observations, many ARNG Commanders and Executive Officers had the tendency to look toward this individual as the person who knew how to put it all together. In fact, he was considered the individual with the greatest amount of experience and knowledge who could get the unit through a tactical or training exercise. I found, especially at the Battalion level, that many commanders allowed their S-3's to run their Field Training Exercise (FTX) without question. Among the staff, this officer had the best working knowledge of combat support assets, but knew very little about logistics. His biggest weakness was working in isolation of other staff officers. Consequently, plans were never coordinated, confusion outweighed coherence and tactical events were not synchronized. The point with these two examples is that the actions these officers took are products of their experience and environment. These officers were doing what they thought was right. In both examples, their immediate supervisors, for the most part, stood by and watched because their experience and knowledge did not allow them to critique nor take charge of the situation.

The Brigade and Battalion Commanders that I interviewed and observed were very dedicated and professional individuals. However, in most cases, tactics and training were not their first priority. Most of these commanders made an honest attempt to supervise and train their subordinates. As one commander stated,

there is only so much time an ARNG Commander has to do all the things that need to be done. He had to do the best he could with the time he had. Most commanders stated that they spent at least one drill with each of their subordinate commanders per quarter, and talked with them many times each week over the telephone. They also said that every month they would send staff members down to subordinate units to inspect training or teach selected individuals or sections.

In almost all cases, I personally found that yearly training schedules were planned in detail at the beginning of every fiscal year. Commanders training guidance was put out at each level of command, and detailed plans were written, briefed and scheduled for that fiscal year. One of the hardest problems for an ARNG Commander to solve was combined arms training. Because of the distances involved between unlike units, the unavailability of money, the lack of training areas, and in some cases equipment, commanders found it extremely difficult to plan and conduct combined arms training outside the AT period. Again, honest attempts were being made to train soldiers and units, but the handicaps under which ARNG Commanders have to work far outweigh the positive attributes.

In looking at some ARNG training schedules, I found that many of the training objectives that were scheduled were not very well thought out nor did they fit into the unit's Mission Essential Task List (METL). In many cases, I believe that Company Commanders were victimized by their senior NCO's and

junior officers influence when company training schedules were being planned. A great deal of time was dedicated to common task training and SQT training. Granted, this type of training is very important, but a lot of it could be done by the individual soldier during his off-duty time. A good example of what I am talking about comes from a training article that was written in an ARNG magazine in which a Tank Company Commander described a typical weekend training drill at his armory. He said,

"The claim to fame of Company A doesn't rest with its officers. We're an excellent company because NCO's lead the training. They are responsible for making sure everyone does their job in the unit."7

He goes on to further describe a typical weekend drill in which he says,

"A typical weekend at the armory....one platoon could be in a room conducting Dumm Kemp Wargame. Another platoon may be in the latrine with radios practicing radio communications. Another platoon would be out in the parking lot with its AN/PRC-77 and a 292 antenna set up to enable them to communicate with the platoon in the latrine....Most armory training is devoted to common soldier tasks."8

My point is how can a Tank Battalion Commander allow a subordinate Company Commander to waste one of his 12 weekend training drills on such trivial training objectives; i.e., practicing radio communications. What is the correlation between setting up a 292 antenna and winning the first battle in the next war, especially when a tank platoon is not authorized that type of antenna? Another point, how many soldiers can talk over one

radio at any one time? How often does the loader, gunner and driver talk over an FM radio set to another tank or to their platoon sergeant/leader? In this case, I cannot blame the Company Commander nor his NCO's for scheduling this type of training. They were doing what they believed was right. As one reads further on in the article, you can feel what is important to the Battalion Commander and perhaps the Brigade Commander. The following were excerpts made by the Battalion Commander from the same article.

- " . Company won the Draper Award three years running.
- . It has been given the best tank company award in the state many times.
- . Its Commander was selected the best Commander in the state.
- . They were the first to reach over strength.
- . They are the best in terms of NCO development."9

All of these points certainly have a significant impact on soldier morale and retention, but are they losing sight of their real wartime mission? Not one time in this article did either commander mention words like tactics, AirLand Battle doctrine, maneuver, fire support, maintenance, etc. As stated by the Company Commander, the NCOs planned and executed these training events. Where was the Battalion Commanders' emphasis? In this case, perhaps it was on the recognizable events that brought attention to the unit. Results, training was spent on nice things to do and not war fighting tasks.



I have seen several ARNG Battalion Commanders struggle through their ARTEP evaluations. There is a certain amount of commonality in the mistakes they make. I would not expect them to be as prepared nor as experienced as their active Army counterparts, but on the other hand, they should know and understand basic tactics and the basic principles of AirLand Battle doctrine. A combat arms Battalion Commander should be able to articulate his tactical intent to his battle staff and subordinate commanders in accordance with AirLand Battle doctrine. If they cannot do this, how could they expect their battle staffs to prepare a coordinated, synchronized OPLAN or OPORD, and their subordinate commanders to execute a maneuver in accordance with that plan? They must have a thorough working knowledge of every combat and combat support asset that will support his unit during the battle; i.e., weaknesses and strengths, weapons characteristics, maintenance and resupply requirements, the proper tactical employment of their weapon systems, etc. In fact, they should be the only person to talk to each Combat Support Commander to explain to them his intent on how he will fight the battle and what he expects them to accomplish. During training exercises, commanders should be able to identify basic tactical strengths and weaknesses of their subordinate and attached units. This would give the commander the knowledge on how to effectively task organize and where to employ his combined arms teams on the battlefield. If they do not understand these basic fundamentals then mistakes are going to be made, and these same mistakes could follow them into combat.

I asked a number of ARNG Battalion Commanders how many times their Brigade Commanders ever critiqued one of their training or maneuver exercises. Almost to the man, they said never. The consensus of opinion was that when their Brigade Commander did come down to inspect training, the briefings and explanations that were given to him were more of an educational briefing than a situational briefing. These same ARNG Battalion Commanders stated they had very little confidence in their Brigade Commander's ability to critique or provide adequate tactical guidance to any tactical scenario. However, the majority of these Brigade Commanders were very well respected by their subordinate commanders as individuals and as administrators.

#### STRESS AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Two other important training points that should be mentioned and emphasized are stress and physical conditioning. During the training year, the ARNG training periods are primarily conducted one weekend every month. Each training period usually lasts for no more than 48 hours. It is impossible to put a commander and his battle staff through any type of stress-filled exercise in this amount of time. However, it is said that people who will fight future wars may experience so much strain that they will break down whether or not they come into direct contact with the enemy. Fighting in the next war is going to be continuous; units will be dispersed over wide areas; people will be enclosed in mobile vehicles; casualties will be greater; all of this will

cause stress which will affect the performance of any leader.<sup>10</sup> Commanders and battle staffs must learn to work under stress for long periods of time. Procedures must be established to allow leaders and staff officers to rest. It is physically impossible for any human being to be 100 percent effective after 48 continuous hours of work without sleep or rest.

While at the NTC, I saw a number of junior ARNG Guard Officers and NCO's become totally incapacitated from stress and mental fatigue after the first two days of battle. Why? No rest plans had ever been established. In one case, an ARNG Tank Company Commander had to be evacuated to the rear for over 48 hours because of his poor physical condition. Physical conditioning in any combat arms unit is a must. On the average, the ARNG leader and soldier works eight to ten hours a day, five days a week. In combat, these same individuals will find themselves fighting on a battlefield up to 20 hours a day, seven days a week with all the stress of combat added. Physical conditioning is a matter of self-discipline, and can be done by the individual at home. Leaders must be able to operate under stress. Training exercises must contain stress and physical endurance conditions whenever possible. A unit cannot afford to be leaderless at a critical moment in the battle.

## CHAPTER II

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# CHAPTER III

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

I do not believe that the professionalism or the desire to do well is not present in the attitude of the ARNG Field Grade combat arms officers. I believe they are victims of their training situation, lack of imagination and environment which inhibits their ability to gain the experience that will be needed to win their first battle of the next war. If one reads through past Army National Guard publications, the subjects that are written about the most are mobilization and individual training. Very seldom are articles written on lessons learned during ARTEP evaluations, NTC rotations, exercise drills, training experiences, or new training techniques. There is no doubt in my mind that the ARNG can mobilize, and if the transportation assets are available, get to the battlefield. The big question is can they fight and win without taking catastrophic losses in both life and equipment? As a Total Army, how do we guarantee that we have given these ARNG Officers every opportunity to learn, practice and put into use those experiences, conceptual skills and techniques that win wars? When John Shy wrote about America's first 10 battles, he said,

"All 10 cases argue that realistic preparation and testing of senior commanders and their staffs for complex, unnatural task of controlling large scale combat can hardly be overemphasized."<sup>1</sup>

I can not argue with the importance of soldier retention, Employer-Guard relationships, mobilization, politics, family care and other vital programs essential to the ARNG's existence. However, I can say from my own experiences of what I have seen during AI periods and what I have read in various evaluation reports from the NTC, that the ARNG combat arms field grade leaders have a tendency to shy away from these warfighting skills. They do not understand AirLand Battle doctrine, know how to fight it, nor have they been allowed ample opportunity to gain the experience to plan and lead a unit on a simulated modern-day battlefield. The Bagnal Study Group, which reviewed the education and training of officers out to the year 2025, stated,

"Any military development system must produce officers who can envision the nature of future wars, expect it to occur and personally prepare themselves and their subordinates to fight and win."<sup>2</sup>

The study also went on to say,

"These are fundamental principles of professional and leadership development that apply to all officers: internalized professional values, the warrior spirit, an action oriented thought process, progressive mastery of the Art and Science of War, responsibility for developing subordinates and a broad based general education."<sup>3</sup>

Taking what the military development system should produce and the fundamental principles of professional and leadership development into consideration, the ARNG should take a serious look into its training philosophy of its Field Grade Officers.

AirLand Battle doctrine in all its applications must be studied and understood by these key leaders if it is going to be applied to the battlefields of the future.

Most ARNG Battalion Commanders operate in what is called a command systems overload. What this means is an ARNG Battalion Commander could have up to three different bosses, depending on what and where his wartime mission is assigned. These bosses, the State AG, wartime commander and an ARNG Brigade Commander, all affect his annual training plan in some manner. Each of these commanders places certain training objectives that are pertinent to his particular missions on these Battalion Commanders. Unfortunately, many of these objectives are never coordinated among the different headquarters. Consequently, because of the insufficient training time available to the ARNG, many of the wartime training objectives are never accomplished. The key point that one should take away from this problem is that training priorities must be established and coordinated and a combat METL (Mission Essential Task List) must be developed for every ARNG unit. All commanders within that units' chain of command, regardless of rank and organization, must agree that the battalion's first training priority is to train for its selected wartime mission(s).

Another factor that has to be taken into consideration by the ARNG senior officer is the rapidly increasing sophistication of his equipment. This fact alone will have a significant impact on the way his unit will be trained, and the way he will fight future battles. As FM 100-5 states,

"The conditions of combat on the next battlefield will be unforgiving of errors and will demand great skill, imagination and flexibility of leaders."<sup>4</sup>

That quote alone, coupled with the changes in doctrine and weapon systems, has required the ARNG Officer to acquire even more knowledge in order to remain technically and tactically proficient. It also points out that the ARNG Officer should be allowed more time to digest and apply this new AirLand Battle doctrine so that they can gain a better understanding on how it works and how to fight it. With this understanding, they should be able to adequately train their units and soldiers how to fight the Army's new doctrine.

Mentorship also plays a very important part in both the Commander and the Field Grade Officer's role. A competent mentor will supplement the officer and his professional development program. He must understand the development needs of his subordinates and actively provide the guidance and coaching necessary to ensure their development in their duty assignments. If this Field Grade Officer is not properly trained or he is forced away from performing his duties during weekend drills, then how can a junior officer be adequately developed? There is absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind that every individual officer is responsible for his own self-development in school and in the field, and for staying up-to-date on the latest technology and doctrinal changes. However, to assist the officer in his self-development, feedback by his immediate supervisor is also necessary to indicate his progress. The Bagnel study said,



"Commanders and supervisors in units and organizations have the responsibility to develop their subordinates by assisting them in on the job practice to gain experience and providing them feedback to ensure the officer has completely gained the new frame of reference."<sup>5</sup>

From my observations, this is one of the weakest points in the ARNG Field Grade Officers' professional skills. With the lack of tactical experience and knowledge, senior officers do very little to teach their subordinates how to fight our AirLand Battle doctrine. Norman L. Grunstad said, "Competent effective leadership is the Total Army's key to success in training and to success in the ultimate test...combat."<sup>6</sup>

#### Recommendations

This study has addressed some of the more realistic problems that face the field grade officer leadership in the ARNG. Although the examples given are not meant to bring discredit upon the Army National Guard nor their capabilities, they merely point out that the Total Force has to place more emphasis on the training of our ARNG Field Grade Officers. These officers could be placed into warfighting situations that require them to make split-second decisions. Decisions that require professional knowledge, experience and ability. In the past, the ARNG has given individual MOS training, mobilization and non division and corps battle staff training a great deal of emphasis. However, there has never been any emphasis placed on training the ARNG Field Grade Officers on how to fight AirLand Battle doctrine.

Some ARNG Battalions have experienced a rotation through the NTC, which has produced a new plateau of experienced combined arms leaders. Those leaders that have not had this opportunity must receive the same experience through their own unit training programs. In either case, trainers must know how to fight AirLand Battle doctrine.

Training must focus on a unit's wartime mission. Each commander must analyze his mission and his commander's intent. This process will generate a mission essential task list for his unit. The battle focus of a training program must be centered on the most critical battle tasks a unit can expect to be called on to do. Once these tasks have been identified, the commander must evaluate his unit to see how well they can perform these tasks. From the weaknesses observed, a training plan is developed for the unit.

The ARNG must take advantage of every battle simulator that is available to them for training, especially at the Brigade and Battalion level. One particular simulator that will provide these officers with the experience on how to fight AirLand Battle doctrine, TOC procedural operations, staff planning and coordination, stress and decision making is ARTBASS. This training simulator can place company Commanders, Battalion and Brigade Commanders and their battle staffs in their wartime areas of responsibility and simulate those likely problems that could arise from both an operational and logistical point of view. Final result of this training experience is a better

understanding of the Threat, AirLand Battle doctrine, the planning and coordination process of preparing an operations order and the experience of synchronizing and orchestrating the execution of that order under simulated battlefield conditions. As General Vuono, Army Chief of Staff, has stated, "Training is my most important priority. Readiness is first priority....and training is the cornerstone of readiness."

### CHAPTER III

#### ENDNOTES

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